

## IV. Planning Context

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

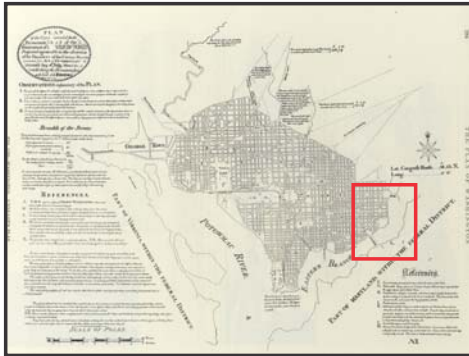


Figure 11 - L'Enfant Plan of Washington, ca. 1790.



Figure 12 - McMillan Plan of Washington, ca. 1902.

Public Reservation 13 is identifiable in some of the earliest plans for Washington, DC. The original L'Enfant Plan of 1791 shows the Reservation slightly smaller than its current size and set apart from the traditional street grid of the city. The 1792 and 1800 editions of the plan incorporate most of Andrew Ellicott's revisions to L'Enfant's plan and show the Reservation approximately the same size as today and in the same location.

In 1848 the 30th Congress authorized the Commissioner of Public Buildings to transfer "such portion of the public reservation of land in the City of Washington, numbered thirteen, called the Hospital Square," to the vestry to extend the parish burial grounds (citation omitted). History texts from the period indicate that the Washington Asylum, previously known as "the workhouse and alms house," relocated from Judiciary Square to Reservation 13 between 1843 and 1846. Thus presumably, the reference to "Hospital Square" in plans from 1848. A January 20, 1877 Act mentions the Washington Asylum in Reservation 13 with reference to the construction of workhouses for the use of the District in connection with the Asylum upon "the public reservation in said City of Washington now occupied in part by the buildings of the Washington Asylum," designating the grounds south of the Asylum along 19<sup>th</sup> Street for new workhouses.

The Senate Park Commission Plan of 1901-1902 (commonly called the "McMillan Plan") proposed a new park system for the city, including the creation of the National Mall. The plan depicts a number of larger, isolated uses relegated to the peripheries of the original L'Enfant plan boundaries, including what eventually became Gallaudet College, and a site for a U.S. US Soldiers Home. In that plan, Public Reservation 13 is identified as the "City Farm". Massachusetts Avenue is shown crossing Reservation 13 and continuing to the other side of the river via a new bridge. At that time, this location was identified by the planners as a point where the character of Anacostia River landscape changes from an urban waterfront to a natural 'aquatic garden' or tidal marshland. The bridge helped to mark this transition.

The main buildings of DC General Hospital were constructed in the 1930's and 1940's. Additional buildings were added over time, growing to a complex of about 1,416,696 gsf for hospital and health related uses. The new Central Detention Facility (the DC Jail), constructed in 1976 replaced the Old Jail which dated from the 1870's and was located at the corner of Independence Avenue and 19th Street. A new Correctional Treatment Facility was added on the site to the southeast of the DC Jail which now has a combined total of 860,229 gsf.

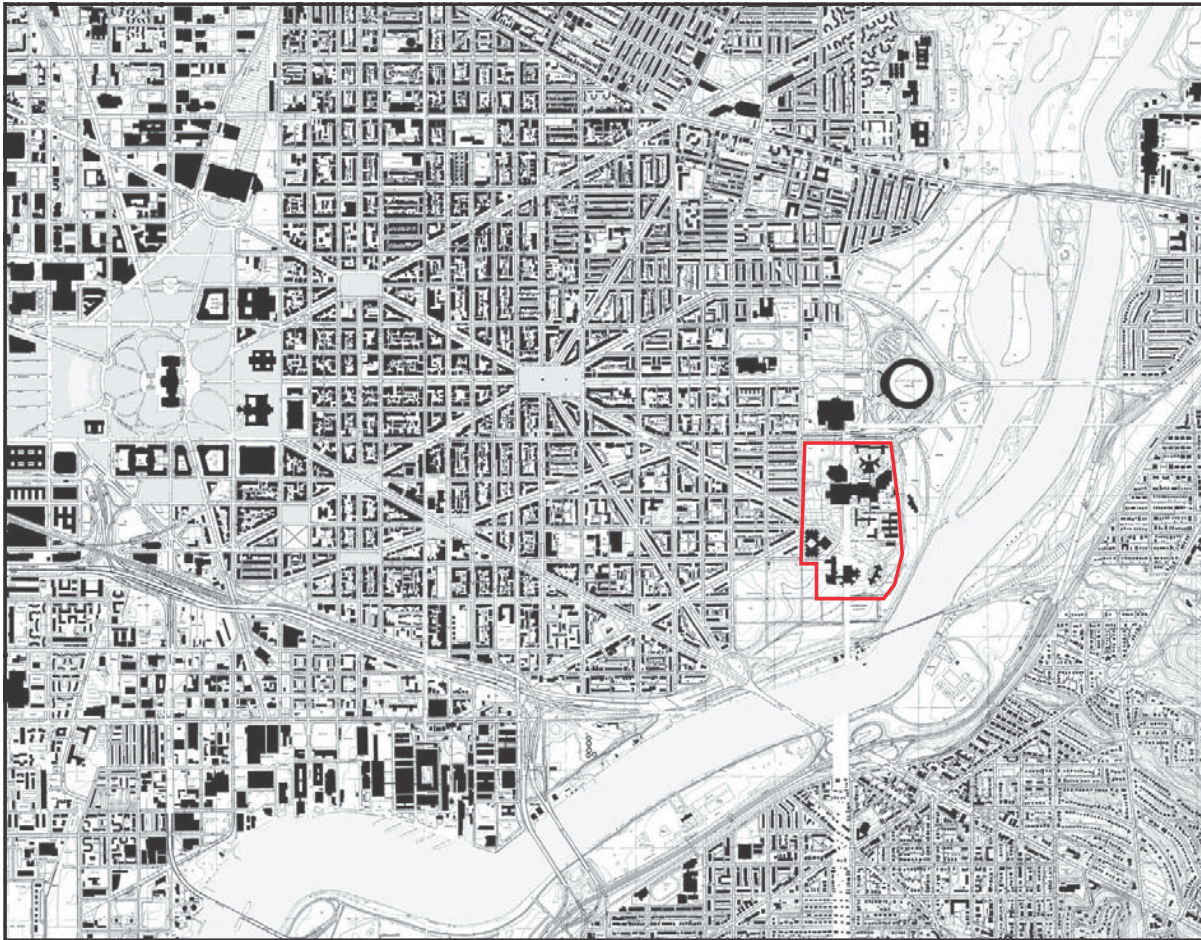


Figure 13 - Regional Context Plan

## CITY-WIDE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Public Reservation 13 is located at the edge of the original I' Enfent Plan for the city. It sits between the orthogonal street plan of the largely residential Hill East neighborhood and the Anacostia River to the east. Two of the diagonal streets of the earliest plans of the city terminate on the site: Potomac Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue. The rest of the local streets bordering the site are 19th Street, running one way north, and Bay, Burke and C Streets SE running two- way in an east- west direction. Bay and Burke are truly local streets in that they extend only one block whereas C Street runs the length, albeit indirectly, of Capitol Hill and is from the earliest plans of the city.

The adjacent Hill East neighborhood is largely comprised of rowhouses with generous front yard set-backs and alleys to the rear.

Independence Avenue stretches from the northern edge of the Reservation all the way to the National Mall and on toward the Potomac River. It carries a large portion of commuter traffic and runs one way from west to east. It also is a major access to parking lots at RFK Stadium for sporting events.

To the south of the site is the historic Congressional Cemetery. Across the river is Anacostia Park, the continuation of Massachusetts Avenue and Fort Dupont Park, as well as a locomotive bridge that crosses the river and continues through the park to the northeast.

The regional traffic arteries of Interstates 295 and 395 are close to the site and the network of roads facilitates connection to these highways.

Kingman Island, one of the islands in the center of the Anacostia River, is just beyond the adjacent shoreline near the Reservation.

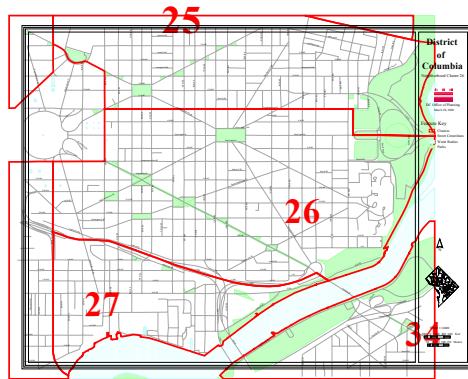


Figure 14 - Cluster Plans

### Related Planning Efforts

Public Reservation 13 is directly related to two ongoing planning efforts – the *Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI)* and the *Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)*.

### NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE

As part of the Mayor's Neighborhood Action Initiative, Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs) were completed for every neighborhood in the District of Columbia. These plans were created by neighborhood residents during the Spring and Summer of 2001. The SNAPs outlined the essential ingredients of a thriving neighborhood and identified the top priorities for improving the livability of their own community. Public Reservation 13 was included in the SNAP of the neighborhoods of Hill East, Capitol Hill and Lincoln Park. The top priorities for this area included:

#### Neighborhood Economic Development

Neighborhood residents wanted to see better retail, commercial, and employment opportunities in their neighborhoods. They stressed the importance of utilizing transit stations in accomplishing this goal.

#### Transportation Solutions

The neighborhoods have substantial concerns relating to commuter traffic and tour buses on residential streets, insufficient and unsafe bicycle and pedestrian ways, and severely constrained parking. They advised that future planning accommodate these needs and begin to address and correct transportation issues.

#### Recreation, Education and Amenities

Open space amenities in the neighborhoods are insufficient. Though residents live close to the Anacostia River, the river remains physically inaccessible and unsafe for public use. Metro plazas too represent underutilized and poorly designed public space. Residents want signature parks and plazas that offer usable opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

### Housing and Historic Preservation

Maintaining housing affordability – particularly for seniors and low-income families – was a top concern, as was the preservation of the historic character of the area.

### Appropriate Design and Development

Perhaps more than any other priority, residents were concerned about the impact of future development in their neighborhoods. Two questions in particular worried area residents – what would happen to the land once occupied by DC General and how could development make the most of their three Metro stations? Residents felt it was imperative for the District to complete a Master Plan for the DC General site to make sure that the land was not allocated solely to locally undesirable land uses (LULUs). Similarly, residents recognized that their Metro stations could draw positive development, but only if plans were completed that could catalyze the potential of these resources.



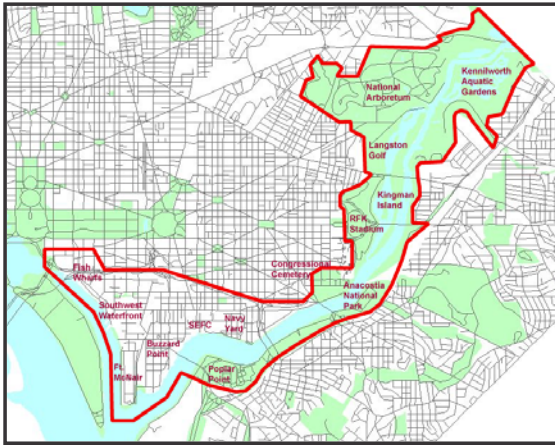


Figure 15 - AWI Study Area

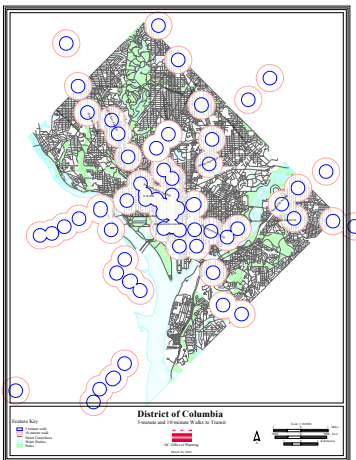


Figure 16 - TOD locations in Washington, DC

### ANACOSTIA WATERFRONT INITIATIVE

The primary objective of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is to improve the environment around the waterfront to highlight the Anacostia River as a key natural and community resource of the District of Columbia. The project area encompasses the whole of the Anacostia Waterfront from the DC/Maryland border to the confluence of the Potomac River – including the Washington Channel in Southwest.

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is a common partnership of Federal, District, neighborhood, and non-profit stakeholders to create a vision for waterfront areas along the Anacostia River. Building on the great historic plans for the District of Columbia, the partnership envisions a new, energized waterfront for the new millennium that will unify diverse areas of the District of Columbia by capitalizing on one of the City's greatest natural assets, the Anacostia River shoreline. The Waterfront Initiative seeks to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods, enhance and protect park areas, improve quality of water and environment, develop Government-owned land for the benefit of the people of the District of Columbia and the Federal and District of Columbia Governments, and increase access to the water and enhance activities provided along the waterfront.

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative has seven overarching planning principles:

- ◆ Utilize the river corridor to better connect neighborhoods and to help unify the District and the region;
- ◆ Restore the Anacostia's water quality and enhance the river's beauty and natural resources;
- ◆ Create a lively urban waterfront that offers diverse amenities to serve a world-class capital city for the new millennium;
- ◆ Stimulate sustainable economic development along the waterfront and near the river;
- ◆ Maximize education and training opportunities for residents that may result from the Initiative;
- ◆ Promote excellence in design in every aspect of the Initiative, and;
- ◆ Promote stewardship of the river and address concerns of all segments of the community, including residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors.

Reservation 13 represents an immediate opportunity to initiate the AWI through the creation of a critical segment of a great park system along the Anacostia River.

### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

In fall of 2001, the Mayor convened a Task Force to define what Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) might mean for the District of Columbia and how our transit resources – both bus and rail – could be used to improve the quality of our neighborhoods, spur economic development, and help the smart growth of our city.

The Task Force defined TOD in the District of Columbia as “a land use strategy to accommodate new growth, strengthen neighborhoods, and expand choices and opportunities by capitalizing on bus and rail assets to stimulate and support vibrant, compact, diverse and accessible neighborhood centers within an easy walk of transit.”

The Task Force found that TOD is one of the most effective tools available to Washington, D.C. to help realize its vision as one of the premier places in the world to live, learn, work and visit. The District's 39 Metro stations and major bus corridors offer the potential to accommodate both new and current residents in attractive, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods offering a range of housing choices within a 10-minute walk of high-quality transit. The transit resources provide a unique opportunity to form vibrant neighborhood centers that are linked to opportunities and activities throughout the District and region.

Recent estimates indicate there are over 2,000 acres of vacant, abandoned, or underutilized land within a 10 minute walk of these stations or major bus corridors that could potentially accommodate over 35,000 new units of housing along with shops, offices, parks, and other amenities.

As a result of the Task Force's work, and in response to a grassroots groundswell in support of better utilizing transit resources to both support economic development and protect environmental quality, the District is establishing a policy to support TOD as a land use and growth strategy for the District of Columbia.

Reservation 13 is served by two underutilized Metro stations at Stadium/Armory. These represent opportunities to promote TOD and make the site more attractive for future development.